

August 6, 2026

Planning Commission
County of San Diego
5510 Overland Ave., Ste. 110
San Diego, CA 92123



Re: Housing Unlocked, Phase 1

Dear Planning Commissioners:

On behalf of the Building Industry Association of San Diego County (BIA), I am writing to provide the following comments on Phase 1 of Housing Unlocked for your consideration.

The BIA represents over 25,000 local professionals who plan, design, build, and deliver housing throughout our region. Our members are committed to creating homes, supporting economic opportunity, and helping meet San Diego's housing needs. We offer these comments based on our members' direct experience navigating the policies, regulations, and costs that affect housing production and our shared goal of increasing housing opportunities for San Diegans.

Our members have been in frequent contact with staff as they have developed Phase 1 and are appreciative of the time and commitment to communication. The broad goals of this update are to be applauded- increasing flexibility, providing certainty in process and removing old or irrelevant regulations. These are all priorities that our industry shares and are important to truly unlocking homebuilding.

With that said, our industry has shared a continued frustration with the County's lack of alignment to its own deadlines as outlined in its own Housing Element, and the prolonged inconsistencies between the Housing Element and General Plan. That segmented approach to policy making is a significant challenge to building within the County, and is evidenced by the declining permits over recent years.

There are components of Phase 1 that we believe will have a positive impact and we appreciate that County staff have incorporated some of our recommendations into the current Phase 1 proposal. In particular, we support the change to simplify the Building Type designators and allow more duplexes, triplexes, and attached building types in single family zones. We applaud County staff for proposing this significant change which will result in more homes in the County and improve housing affordability.

Although we recognize the positive direction of Phase 1, we would remind you that there is far more the County should be pursuing to address our region's ongoing housing deficit. As you know, unincorporated San Diego land is one of the most viable paths to building naturally attainable homes and we are eager to see those villages as designed by the County come to life.

More specifically, we would like to highlight the following items:

- Further simplification of the building type designators
- Broader exclusions from FAR for uninhabitable space (not just accessory structures)
- Increasing building height limits based on realistic design assumptions
- Ensuring that planned densities can actually be accommodated within minimum lot sizes without additional layers of discretionary review
- Reduced setback requirements for front, side, and rear setbacks

We understand that additional zoning ordinance updates are expected in Phase 2 of Housing Unlocked, including some of the more meaningful changes that could help move the needle on housing supply. We encourage the County to take the opportunity of Phase 2 to take bolder steps to simplify development standards and remove unnecessary regulations that block housing.

The BIA wants to be clear that we are supportive of the progress being made in Phase 1 of Housing Unlocked but that we remain concerned about the broader regulatory landscape for County land use. We would encourage the Commission to look for ways to expedite the process for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Housing Unlocked and act with urgency to create a more comprehensive approach.

If you should have any questions, please contact Stefanie Benvenuto at stefanie@pacpublicaffairs.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Aimee Faucett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aimee Faucett
President & CEO
Building Industry Association of San Diego County